



Bunker Hill Monument

Less than two months after Lexington and Concord, patriots and British troops engaged in one of the bloodiest encounters of the War for Independence — the Battle of Bunker Hill. The Battle of Bunker Hill was actually fought on Breed's Hill, which was lower and closer to the water.

On June 17, 1775, a regiment of nearly 1,500 colonists was entrenched in an earthwork fort on top of Breed's Hill. The famous order, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes!", which legend attributes to Colonel William Prescott, has come to immortalize the determination of the Colonists facing the powerful British Army during the famous battle and was ordered to make sure that each shot would count. The poorly trained and ill-prepared colonial forces repelled two major assaults. During the third assault the Americans' ammunition ran out and they engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The British had bayonets and finally took over. Over 1,000 British, approximately half of the regiment, were killed or wounded. The Americans lost 441 men, the most famous was the patriot, Dr. Joseph Warren. Although he held the rank of major general, Warren fought the battle as gentleman volunteer. Though the British won the battle, their losses were immense, inspiring patriots to continued resistance. By 1783, the United States had won its independence.

Today a 221-foot granite obelisk denotes the site of the first major battle of the American Revolution. Visitors can choose to climb the 294 steps to the top of the monument for a wonderful view of Boston.



Other Supplementary Information



Photograph by Steve Dunwell

Copp's Hill Burying Ground

Copp's Hill Burying Ground is the final resting place of merchants, artisans and craft people who lived in the North End. Located on a hill on which a windmill once stood, the land was given to the town. It was named after the 17th century shoemaker William Copp, who originally owned the property.

The grounds are also the final resting place of thousands of free African-Americans who lived in a community on the current Charter Street side of the burying ground, called the "New Guinea Community." Notable people who are buried here include Robert Newman, the sexton who displayed the signal lanterns the night of Revere's ride; Edmund Hartt, builder of the USS Constitution; and Prince Hall, a freed slave and founder of the African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

Because of its height and panoramic vistas, the British used this vantage point to train their cannons on Charlestown during the Battle of Bunker Hill. The British used the graves of patriots for target practice and you can see musketball marks on the graves. Daniel Malcom, who was a member of the Sons of Liberty, requested to be buried "in a Stone Grave 10 feet deep" safe from the British bullets. This is noted on his headstone.

